
The Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Mobile Education Team Visits Santiago Chile

**By
Commander Catherine D. Ripley, USN
Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management**

Located on the Western coast of South America and occupying nearly the entire west coast, lies the country of Chile. From its northern tip, bordering Peru and Bolivia to its southernmost tip, near Cape Horn and only about 120 miles from Antarctica, the length of Chile is about the same distance as New York City to San Francisco. With 2,666 miles of coastline, this elongated country provides vastly diverse landscape, geography and climate ranging from the driest desert on earth to the ominous Andes mountain range and some of the richest vineyards in the world. Truly a land of diversity, its people, politics, architecture and culture are also a mix of indigenous Indian tribes, Spanish, German, and British influences.

The Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Mobile Education Team (MET) team to Santiago included Dr. Craig Brandt, Mr. Michael Layton, Mr. Ken Martin and Commander Catherine Ripley, USN. Our mission was to provide a Security Assistance Foreign Purchaser (SAM-F) course to fifty-five Chilean students. The students were a good mix of Air Force, Army and Navy mid to senior grade officers, enlisted personnel and a few civilians. Our entire course was taught through simultaneous translation in a large conference room located in the Chilean National Defense Staff headquarters. It was a lively and interactive group which prompted us to field many good questions germane to security assistance. At first glance, the large class size, mix of services and language barriers appeared challenging, but after the first day we were amazed at how smoothly things proceeded. This was in large part due to the fantastic skills of our translators, the enthusiasm of the students, and our host at the National Defense Staff, retired Colonel Rafael Martinez, who was instrumental in planning and executing the MET.

**Commander Dave Halladay, Chief,
Navy Section U.S. Military Group Chile,
and DISAM's Craig Brandt and
Commander Cathy Ripley visited
retired Rear Admiral Santiago Díaz
Torres for discussions on logistics.**



The Chilean Defense Forces have not been major foreign military sales customers in the past. The majority of U.S. origin items found in their militaries have come from direct commercial sales and have been limited to minor equipment. However, the very recent purchase of ten F-16s by the Chilean Air Force is the largest foreign military sales case in South American history. The Air Force students were, therefore, particularly interested in boosting their security assistance knowledge. Additionally, the Chilean Navy is currently deciding on the purchase of new construction and possibly used frigates and/or destroyers to complement their aging fleet of British origin ships. There are a few countries, including the U.S., Spain, and The Netherlands being considered to build a new construction frigate. In a separate issue, Chile is also considering

the buy of used Spruance Class Destroyers or Dutch Kortenaer Class Frigates. The Army in Chile has a vested interest in using recently allocated FMFP grants to purchase minor equipment to be used by peacekeeping troops as Chile increases its presence in Peacekeeping missions worldwide.



Commander Carlos Vizcaya Salinas, Commanding Officer of the frigate Ministro Zenteno, and Lieutenant Daniel Muñoz, the ship's electronics warfare officer, hosted DISAM faculty members Ken Martin (left) and Commander Cathy Ripley, USN.

In addition to our Foreign Purchaser's course, we were also asked to provide separate seminars to the Navy New Frigate Program Managers in Valparaiso, where the Navy is headquartered. We also provided an afternoon tutorial to two Air Force Generals involved with the F-16 program in Chile.



Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Salgado Brocal, Chief, National Defense Staff, presided over the class graduation.

While in Valparaiso, we were invited to visit one of their frigates, the Ministro Zenteno, a British Leander Class Frigate. Our host and guide, Commanding Officer, Commander Carlos Vizcaya Salinas briefed us on the long and proud maritime history of the Chilean Navy as well as current and future plans for expansion. Although old (vintage 1968) and well traveled, the Zentano was in good condition and continues to operate off the Chilean coast with other South American and U.S. Navy counterparts. With so much coastline, Chile has always been and will continue to be a maritime nation keenly interested in new technologies and interoperability with their allies.

We were honored to have the Chief of the National Defense Staff, Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Salgado Brocal presiding over the graduation ceremony.

Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Instructor, Mike Layton (far right), providing additional instruction for the Chilean students.



Studying for class.



About the Author

Commander Catherine Ripley is the Deputy Director for International Studies at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and a Master of Arts in National Security Affairs from the Navy Postgraduate School, Monterey. She served as Navy Section Chief, in the Office of Defense Cooperation in the Hague, Netherlands before reporting to the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management. Commander Ripley is the course manager for the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Overseas Course.